

Overlocker Review: Bernina 800DL

Description


BERNINA
800DL

I was lucky enough to be gifted this Bernina 800DL from my mum many years ago when I was living in London and didnâ??t have access to an overlocker. I still remember my dad packing it into the back of the shipping container alongside all our other belongings and all of us crossing our fingers that it would survive the trip from Melbourne to London. Thankfully, it did.

Over the past couple of months, Iâ??ve really got to know this machine. I was without my sewing machine for a while, so I found myself taking the time to really get acquainted with what it can do. To be honest, I learnt a lot! In a way, this makes this article perfectly timed, because itâ??s given me a whole new appreciation for just how good this machine is and how much I rely on it.

For this review of my Bernina 800DL, much like my â??Sewing Machine Review: Bernina B530â?², I thought Iâ??d share 10 things I genuinely love about this overlocker.

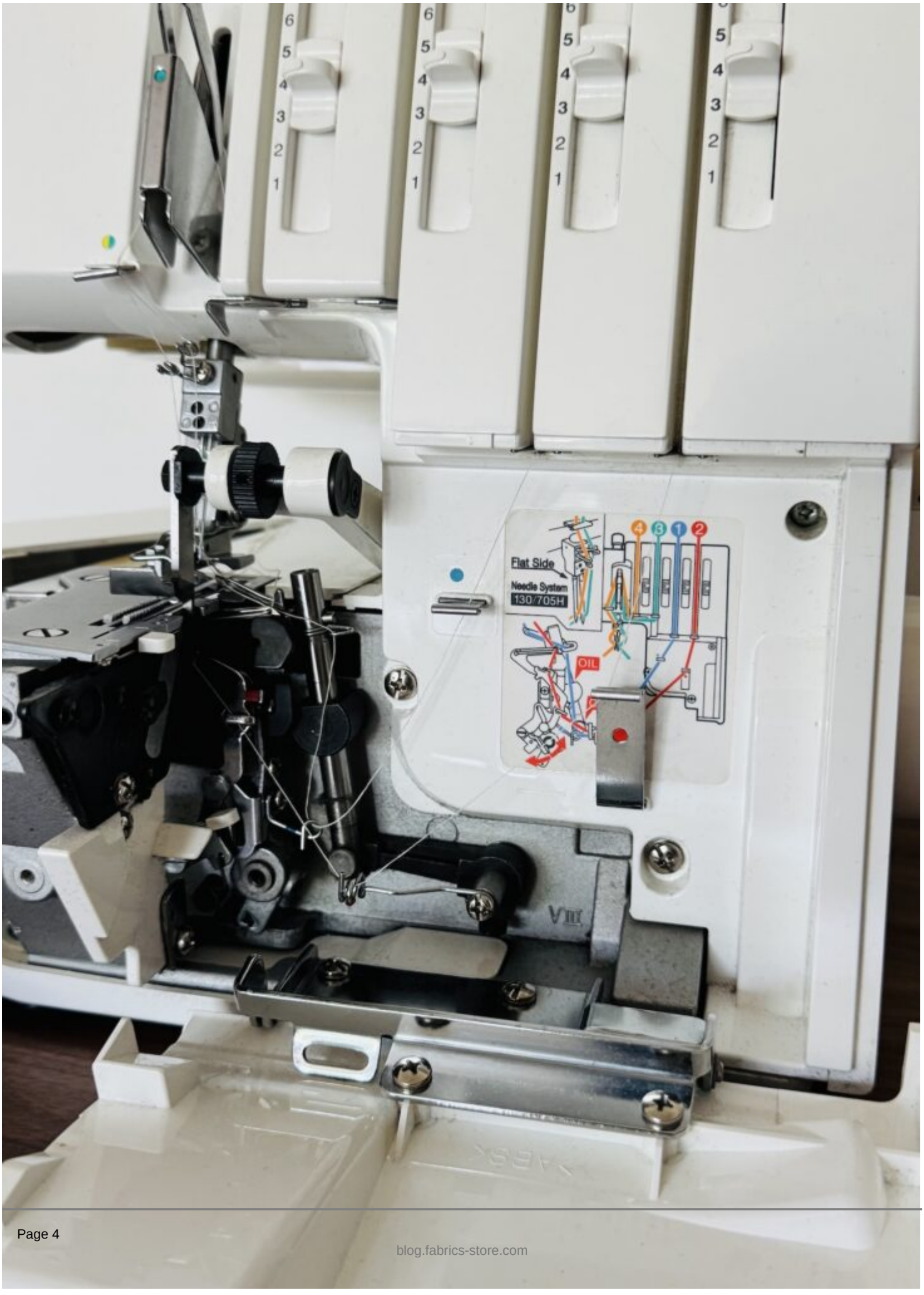
Note: *Unfortunately, the 800DL is no longer available, but Iâ??m sure there are newer models and alternatives out there that are just as good (or maybe even better!).*

1. Itâ??s easy to thread

This is easily number one for me.

Overlockers have this stigma of being terrifying to thread. I remember being so intimidated to thread this one that while I was living at home, I would call out to mum every single time I needed it rethreaded or wanted a change of thread.

But honestly, once I was forced to do it on my own a few times after I moved out, I realised it really isnâ??t that difficult. Sure, I definitely didnâ??t master it the first time around. It took time. But, like anything, it just requires a bit of practice, and with this machine, all you really need to do is follow the colour-coded guides inside the looper cover.


Flat Side
Needle System
130/705H
OIL

That said, mainly because Iâ??m lazy, I still do my best to avoid completely rethreading it. If you are interested in a bit of a cheatâ??s guide to threading overlockers that I always use, check out my article â??How to thread an Overlocker (the Easy Way)â??.



2. On the topic of thread, it works fine with both overlocker and all-purpose thread

I really appreciate that this machine isnâ??t too fussy about thread (provided itâ??s good quality of course). I regularly use both dedicated overlocker thread and standard sewing thread, such as GÃ¼termann, without any issues.

As a bit of a perfectionist, I like my thread colours to match my fabric as closely as possible. Because of that, I often buy extra reels of the same all-purpose thread Iâ??m using on my sewing machine and use those in the overlocker too. Sure, itâ??s more expensive, but itâ??s a simple way to get a perfect colour match without having to invest in large cones of every shade.


CA 02778
100 % Polyester
110 yds/m
CARTEM

3. Itâ??s reliable

With this machine, I know that whenever I turn it on, itâ??s going to produce clean, balanced, and professional-looking stitching. Itâ??s dependable, consistent, and has never really given me any trouble (touch wood as I write this). It handles whatever I throw at it, finishing seams on everything from lightweight cottons and linens to heavyweight denim and canvas.

4. I rarely need to adjust the settings

I generally sew garments using woven fabrics, and for this type of sewing, I rarely have to adjust and fiddle around with the settings. Most of the time, the default settings work perfectly well.

Once the machine is threaded, itâ??s essentially ready to go. I donâ??t have to spend time constantly testing stitch settings or tweaking the tension. I can get straight to the part I enjoy most, actually overlocking (yes, I find overlocking kind of therapeutic). This level of efficiency is particularly important to me when I am sewing day in, day out.


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5. But, if adjustments are needed, the controls are easy to navigate

Overlockers can seem intimidating at first because there are so many settings you can adjust and tweak. However, this machine makes those adjustments surprisingly straightforward.

While I rarely deviate from the default settings, when adjustments are needed the controls are really easy to navigate. Whether itâ??s adjusting the tension, changing from overlocking to a rolled hem, or shifting the blade, everything can be done with a simple turn of a dial, flick of a lever, or movement of a slider. This ease of adjustment also makes experimentation a little less scary.


5
4
3
2
1
inch

6. Itâ??s beginner-friendly, without being limiting

This is a great beginner-friendly overlocker. Itâ??s straightforward to use, and itâ??s easy threading system makes it far less intimidating when youâ??re just starting out.

That said, itâ??s also a machine you can grow into as your sewing skills grow and develop. Itâ??s capable enough to tackle more advanced construction and decorative techniques, including 2-, 3-, and 4-thread stitching, flatlock seams, rolled hems, super-stretch seams for knitwear, and gathering. Even after all this time, I really donâ??t feel like Iâ??ve outgrown it at all. As I mentioned earlier, I am still discovering things it can do.

7. It has a differential feed

I had assumed most overlockers came with this control, but apparently not. So I have definitely been taking this setting for granted.

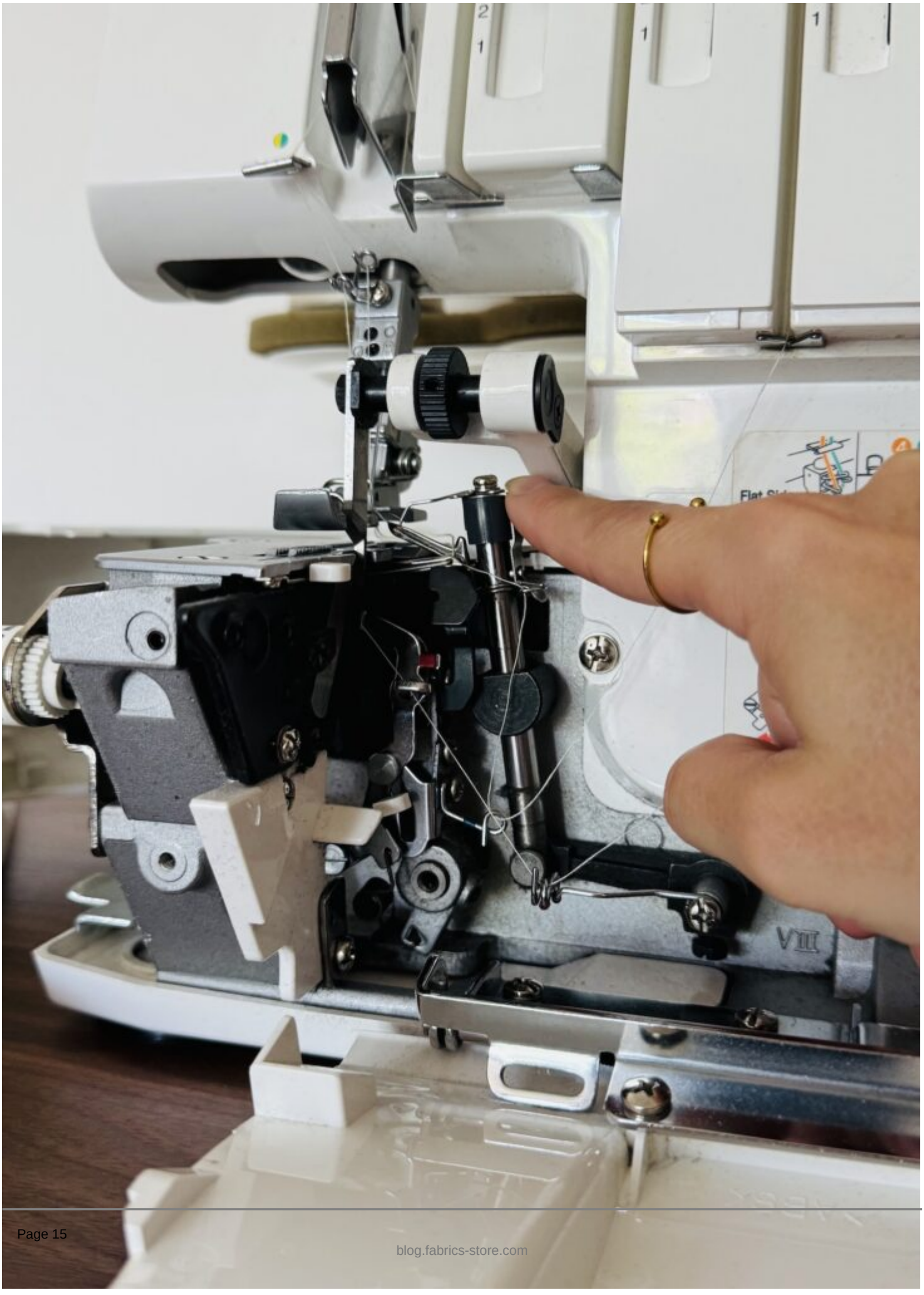
This feature is invaluable, preventing those annoying wavy and stretched seams that overlockers can produce. What it essentially does is control how the feed dogs move the fabric through the machine. The feed dogs are the metal teeth you can see underneath the presser foot (similar to those found on a sewing machine).

For more on this cool, but sometimes hard to understand setting, and whether you might want it in your next machine, check out my article **â??How to Start Using Your Overlocker: A Beginnerâ??s Guide â?? Part 2â??**.

8. It has an upper looper converter attachment

This is a bit embarrassing, but I only discovered this little attachment recently and it is pretty useful. I definitely could have benefited from this on a few occasions.

This attachment allows you to sew with only two threads, using one needle thread and one looper thread. While a two-thread overlock stitch is less common, it can be great back-up option when you are running low on thread or maybe donâ??t want to invest in an additional four reels.


2
1
1
1
VIII

9. Itâ??s pretty easy to look after

You can open this machine right up via the looper and cloth plate cover, which makes it easy to get a brush in there to clean out any lint and fluff. It can get quite messy, especially after working with fabrics like fleece or corduroy. Iâ??ve even poked a vacuum in their on the odd occassion.

I put this machine through a lot, so I do make sure I have it serviced every year, but typical day-to-day maintenance is pretty simple and straightforward.


Flat Side
CAUTION! ATTENTION

10. Itâ??s solid and stable, but isnâ??t bulky, and doesnâ??t make too much noise

I really love the build quality of Bernina machines. This one feels solid and robust, genuinely like it was built to last. It has sewn a lot over the years, and the fact it literally travelled across the world by ship is probably a good measure of how robust it is.

If youâ??ve ever used an overlocker, youâ??ll know that they are prone to bouncing around a bit. This is understandable considering how fast they sew. But mine really doesnâ??t. It feels stable and controlled while sewing, which makes a huge difference. This is an added bonus, especially when maybe you donâ??t have a dedicated sewing table (which I didnâ??t for a long time) and find yourself sewing on less stable surfaces.

Despite all its capabilities, it also isnâ??t a big machine so is perfect if youâ??re like me and have limited space.

Another thing I really appreciate is that itâ??s not too noisy. If you have sewn with different overlockers, you know they can be a bit loud. This is handy in Munich, where things are especially quiet on Sundays. It means I can sew without worrying too much about disturbing the neighbours.


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Is there anything I donâ??t like about this machine?

Honestly, Iâ??m being pretty picky here, as these are super minor things, but if I had to choose something, Iâ??d say:

- It didnâ??t come with a thread catcher, which has to be purchased separately. Iâ??ve definitely been meaning to get one, because without it, this machine can make quite a bit of mess. Itâ??s not really a big problem, just a small annoyance.
- It also didnâ??t come with an accessories box or storage case like my sewing machine did, which would have been handy for keeping all the included bits and pieces together. Again, nothing major, just a little inconvenience.



This really is a machine I genuinely enjoy sewing with every single time I use it. Like my sewing machine, this overlocker has certainly done plenty of miles over the years and has never let me down. I feel no need to replace or upgrade it. Itâ??s reliable, easy to use, and still performs exactly as I need it to. For me, thatâ??s the sign of a truly great machine, and a testament to the quality of Bernina machines. I am a huge advocate for them and feel they really are worth every cent!

CATEGORY

1. COMMUNITY
2. SEWING MACHINE REVIEWS

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